

MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

An Agency Profile Prepared by the
Legislative Fiscal Division

November, 2016



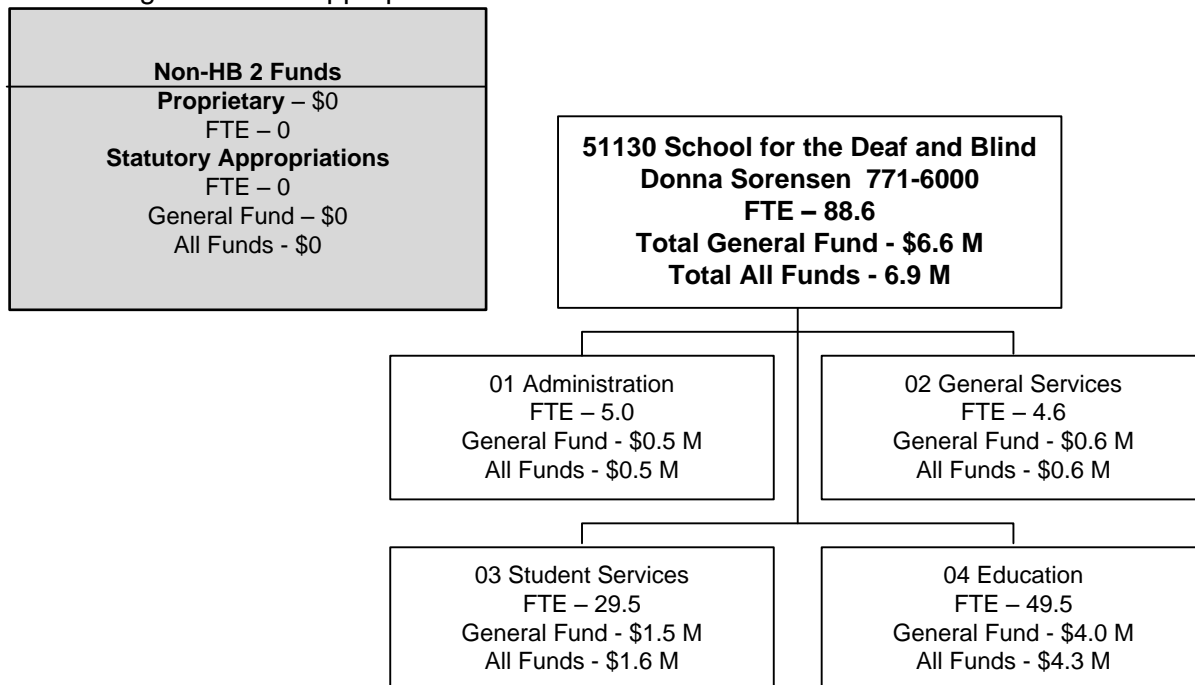
INTRODUCTION

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB), located in Great Falls, is part of Montana's educational system, and under the policy and governance of the State Board of Public Education.

The school promotes and provides free, appropriate, and comprehensive educational opportunities statewide, for children ages birth through twenty-one who are either deaf, hard of hearing, blind, low vision, or deaf-blind. In accordance with 20-8-101 through 121, MCA the legislatively assigned duties are:

- Serve as a consultative resource for parents of, and for public schools enrolling, hearing impaired or visually impaired children
- Establish a system for tracking these children from the time of impairment through the child's exit from intervention or educational services
- Furnish and provide an education for the hearing and visually impaired children that is commensurate with the education provided to non-handicapped children in the public schools
- Assist in locating suitable employment for hearing or visually impaired persons in attendance at the school in consultation with county, state and federal agencies
- Provide vocational training
- Provide transportation expense for residential students to and from the students home

Below is an organizational chart of the branch, including full-time employee (FTE) numbers and the HB2 base general fund appropriations and the total of all funds.



HOW SERVICES ARE PROVIDED

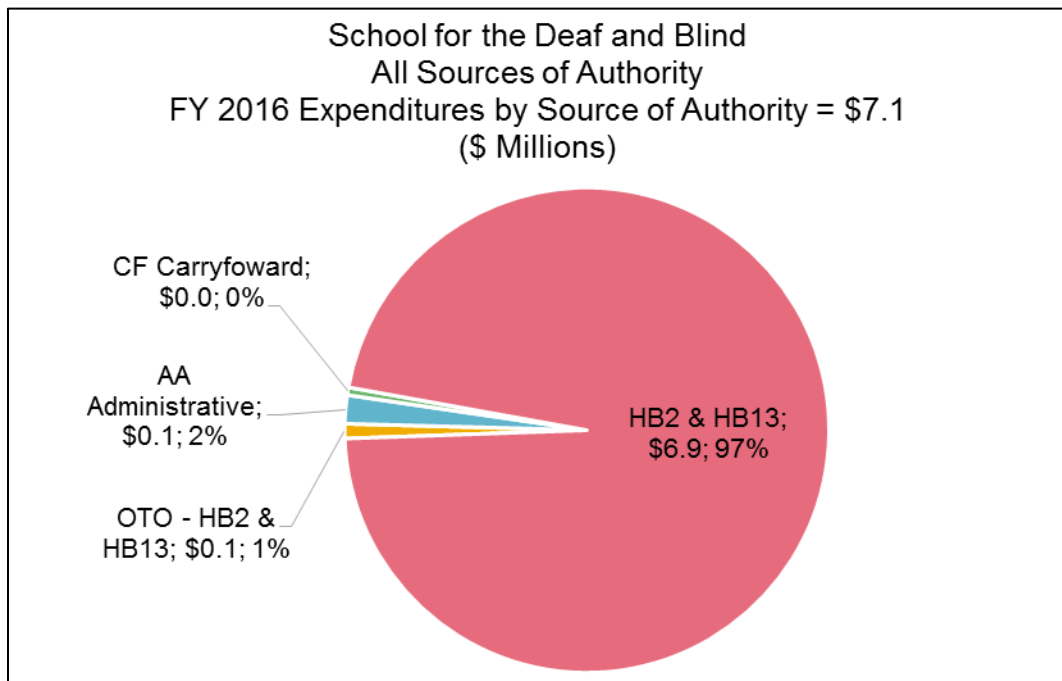
The school provides services through four programs. Their functions are described below.

- Program 01 Administration - provides purchasing, accounting, personnel functions, and management of the business affairs for the school.
- Program 02 General Services - is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the school's campus.
- Program 03 Student Services – provides residential care for children living at the school including:
 - Living quarters
 - Food services

- Around the clock supervision
 - Health services
 - Recreational opportunities
 - Transportation services
- Program 04 Education Program - provides an education for children with hearing and/or sight loss that prevents them from receiving a quality education in their local schools. There are two functional areas within the education program.
 - 1) The education program at the Great Falls Campus:
 - Provides educators and aids with specialized training in the education of hearing/visually impaired children
 - Provides specialized curriculum, instruction, equipment, and learning environment for students taking classes on the Great Falls campus
 - Provides extracurricular activities comparable to the mainstream K-12 education system
 - 2) The outreach services is a statewide program that serves visually and hearing-impaired children who remain in their local school districts by:
 - Providing audio-logical and educational assessments for deaf and blind children
 - Providing consultation and technical assistance to local school districts
 - Providing home-based family training for sensory impaired infants and toddlers
 - Lending of specialized education equipment to school districts throughout the state
 - Arranging family learning weekends for parents and siblings
 - Conducting summer skills camps for deaf and blind students

Sources of Spending Authority

The chart below shows the source of authority for the MSDB that was expended in FY 2016.



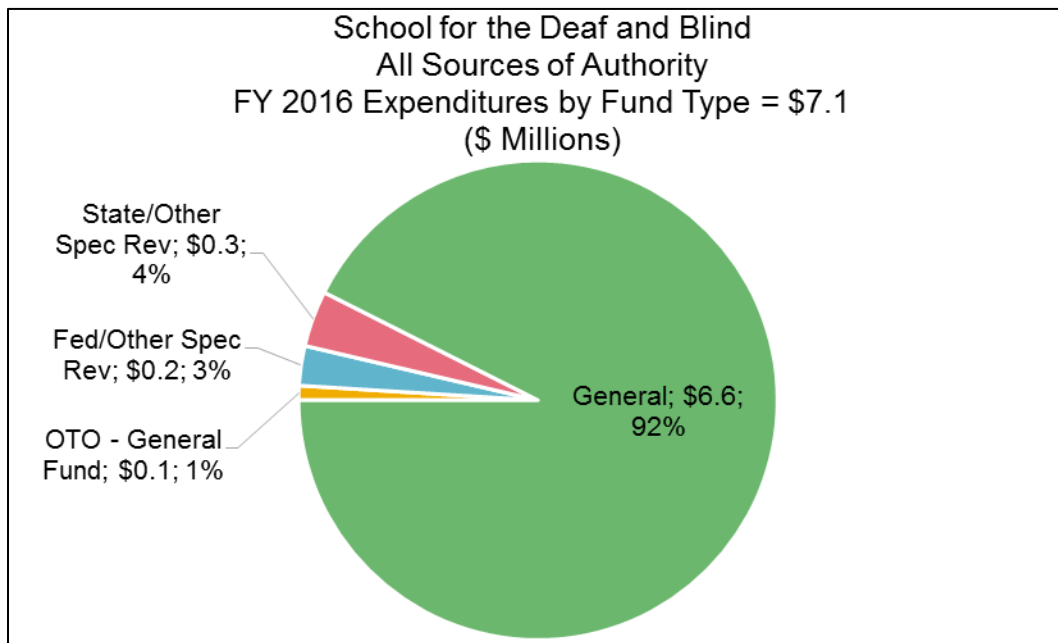
Funding

The Montana School for Deaf and Blind, funded almost entirely with state general fund, receives funding from four sources:

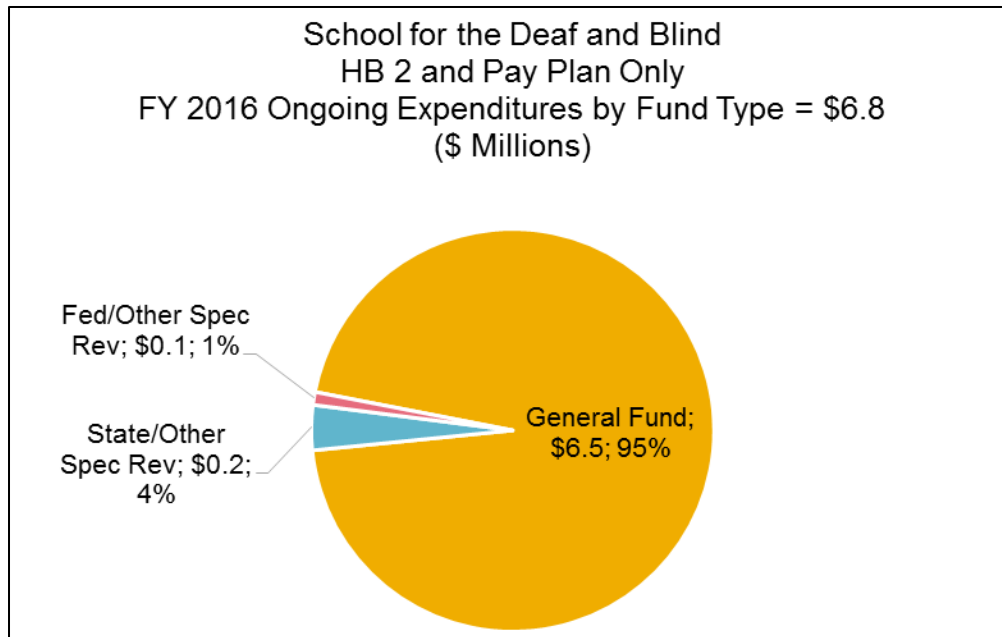
- General Fund (93.6%)
 - An ongoing appropriation from the state general fund authorized by House Bill 2 (HB 2)
 - One-Time-Only (OTO) appropriation from the state general fund to support pay for staff that sponsor extracurricular activities
- State special revenue (3.8%)
 - From school trust income and Medicaid reimbursement
- Federal funds (2.7%)
 - From E.C.I.A. Chapter I and national school lunch
- Not shown in the chart below, the MSDB Foundation supplements the budget. Since 1981, the MSDB Foundation has provided funds to support:
 - Job training and career preparation
 - Assistive technology
 - Outreach services for students in their home communities
 - Capital improvements on campus
 - Field trips, summer camps, and social events for students

Unlike other Montana K-12 public school districts the school does not have authority to levy, the MSDB is entirely dependent on legislative appropriation for its budget.

The chart below shows FY 2016 all actual expenditures by fund type.

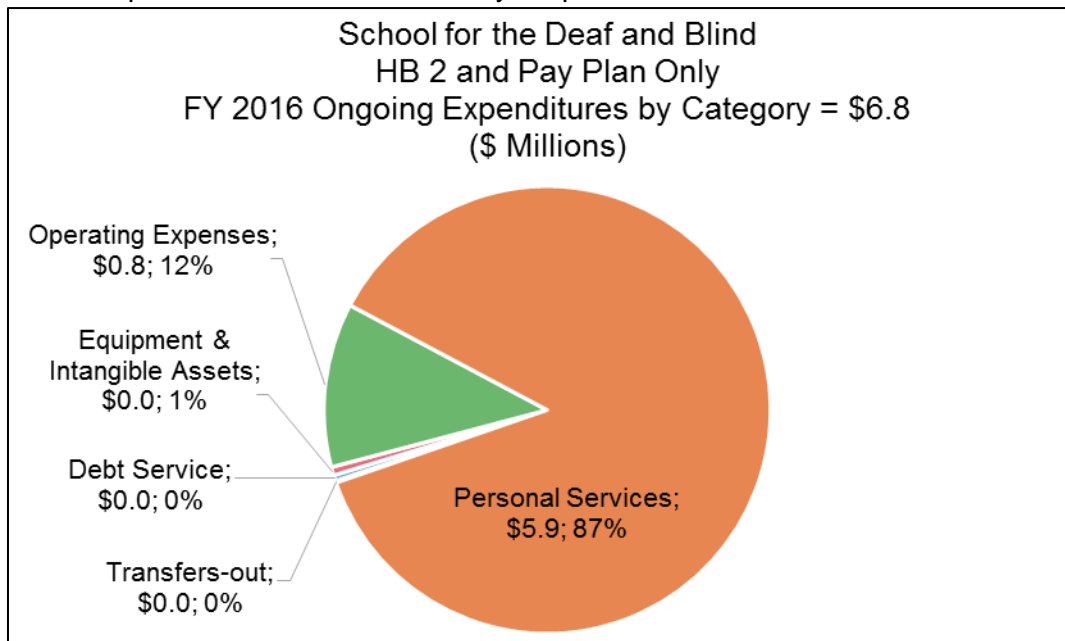


The chart below shows the agency's HB2/pay plan expenditures by fund type.



Expenditures

The chart below explains how the HB 2 authority is spent.



How the 2017 Legislature Can Effect Change

In order to change expenditure levels and/or agency activity, the legislature must address one or more of the following basic elements that drive costs.

- Legislation governing the existence and definition of the School for the Deaf and Blind: funding, operation, and fees charged for services
- Legislation governing state aid to public schools and how it relates to the School for the Deaf and Blind “commensurate with the education provided to non-handicapped children in the public schools”

- Legislation related to off campus consultations, and transition and employability, as well as summer, weekend or vacation time programs

The legislature is less likely to control:

- Federal legislation impacting schools serving citizens with disabilities
- Initiatives or legislation responding to citizen action
- Growth in web-based or long distance education, or other changes in technology that serves this population
- The number of Montana citizens needing this service from year to year
- Economic changes related to costs of utilities, transportation, and residential services

Major Cost Drivers

Personal Services account for 87% of all expenditures, services for residential students accounts for 22% of personal services. Operations expenses account for 12% of all expenditures, maintenance and upkeep of great falls campus and expenses in support of residential students account 56.4% of operating expense.

The education program at the Great Falls campus provides a K-12 program for about 55 to 60 students per year; typically, about 20 to 25 of these students are in residence at the campus, for which the school provides:

- Living quarters
- Food services
- Around the clock supervision
- Health services
- Recreational opportunities
- Transportation services
- Provides educators and aids with specialized training in the education of hearing/visually impaired children
- Provide specialized curriculum, instruction, equipment and learning environment
- Provide extracurricular activities comparable to the mainstream K-12 education system.

The outreach program provides services to hearing and vision impaired students who remain in their local school districts. This program typically serves about 600 students in 114 school districts statewide by providing:

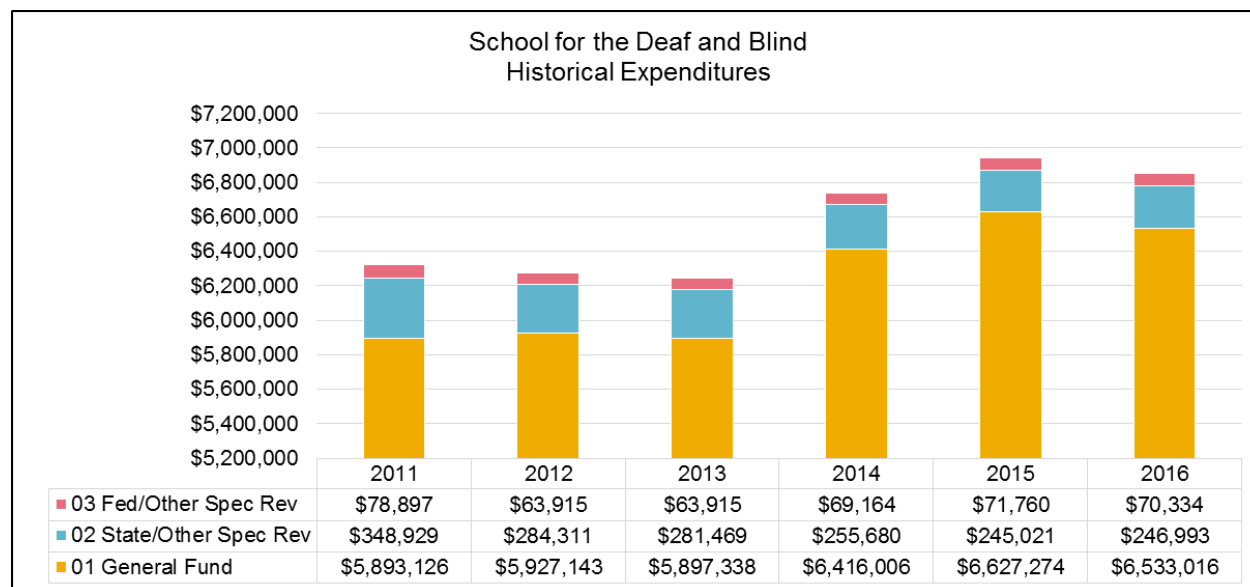
- Providing audio-logical and educational assessments for deaf and blind children
- Providing consultation and technical assistance to local school districts
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The table below summarizes MSDB services provided on campus and through the outreach program.

Montana School for Deaf and Blind Students Served											
<u>Elements</u>	<u>FY 2007</u>	<u>FY 2008</u>	<u>FY 2009</u>	<u>FY 2010</u>	<u>FY 2011</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>	Significance of Data
<u>Students served at Great Falls Campus</u>											Slowly declining enrollment, little to no impact on workload
Education Program Deaf	51	38	34	33	39	35	33	27	25	25	
Education Program Blind	19	20	19	18	20	26	20	22	29	29	
Transition Students	0	4	2	4	6	6	6	3	2	1	
Total Campus Program Students	70	62	55	55	65	67	59	52	56	55	
Total Students in Residence		23	21	18	20	26	20	22	22	23	Increasing number of students receiving services within local school district, increasing workload
<u>Students served through outreach</u>											
Outreach Services - D/HH	100	142	141	188	207	247	265	275	248	340	
Outreach Services - VI Students	212	242	229	236	241	271	300	310	383	345	
Outreach Services - Deaf/Blind Students	6	5	8	10	10	11	12	12	18	26	
Total Outreach Services Students	318	389	378	434	458	529	577	597	649	711	
Total Schools Served	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	94	96	114	114	114	114	

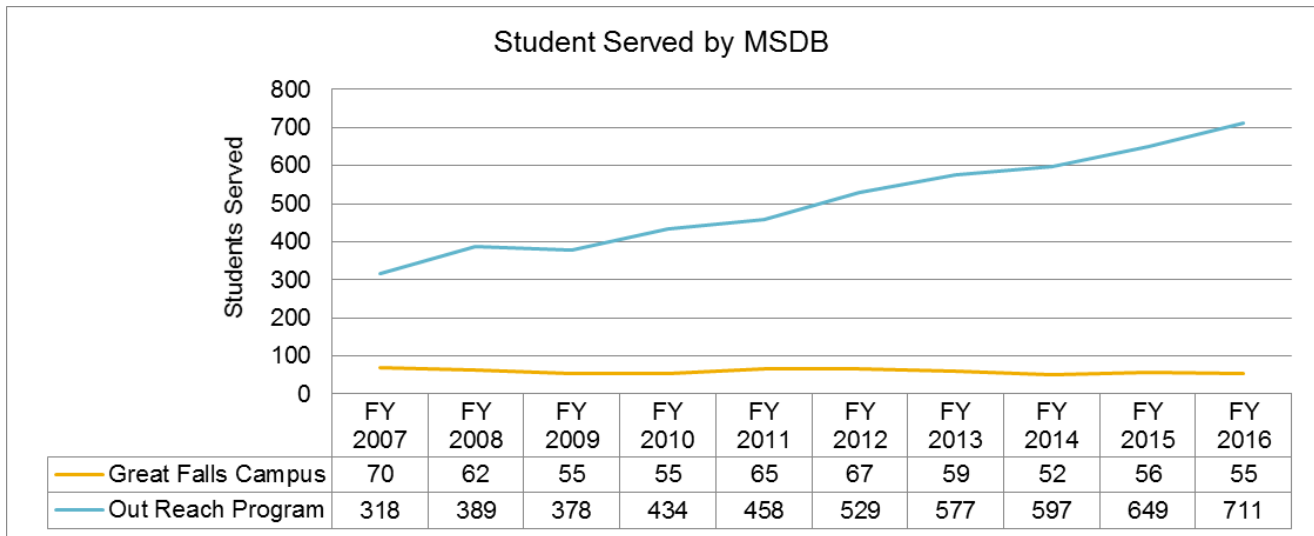
Funding/Expenditure History

The legislature provided funding for pay increases and increased staffing at the school resulting in an increase of 8% in personal service expense FY 2014.



Within the education program, there has been a shift from campus-based services to services provided statewide through outreach initiatives. Student enrollment in the residential program has varied little since 2007 while students served through outreach services have grown at an annualized rate of 9.3%.

The chart below shows the relative growth of students served on campus and through the outreach program.



Major Legislative Changes in the Last Ten Years

The 2011 Legislature statutorily exempted the imposition of vacancy savings on the MSDB for budgeting purposes (17-7-162, MCA).

For further information, you may contact the agency at:

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 Great Falls, MT 59405
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 Webpage: <http://www.msdb.mt.gov/>